

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots' quick integration into e-commerce systems is a major improvement in operational efficiency, but it also raises serious questions about Society 5.0's human-centric tenets. The need to investigate the conflict between the practical benefits of automated customer service and the possible psychological cost of service dehumanization served as the initial motivation for this study. This study specifically sought to ascertain how Generation Z e-commerce users in Padang City, a group known for its high level of digital pragmatism, interact with Perceived Usefulness (X1), Perceived Ease of Use (X2), Service Quality (X3), and Dehumanization (M) to shape the overall Consumer Perception (Y). H1 is accepted since there is a positive and significant relationship between Perceived Usefulness (X1) and Consumer Perception (Y). This research implies that consumers' positive perceptions of the e-commerce platform increase with the perceived usefulness of the AI chatbot in supporting routine online shopping chores (e.g., tracking orders, promptly resolving complaints).

A quantitative approach was used to study these dynamics empirically. 112 valid replies from Gen-Z consumers living in Padang City between June 16, 2026, and July 19, 2026, were obtained thru the systematic collection of primary data using structured questionnaires. Thorough instrument testing was the first step in the analytical procedure to guaranty data validity and dependability. Classical assumption tests were then used to verify that the model was devoid of heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity and that the regression residuals were normally distributed. The direct effects and the mediating mechanism within the suggested research framework were then precisely measured using IBM SPSS Statistics' Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and the Sobel Test. Following the comprehensive data processing and hypothesis testing detailed in Chapter IV, the final conclusions of this research are formulated as follows:

The results of the hypothesis testing reveal that Perceived Usefulness (H1), Perceived Ease of Use (H2), and Service Quality (H3) all exert a positive and significant direct effect on Consumer Perception, with Service Quality emerging as the most dominant predictor. This indicates that when an AI chatbot is highly functional, effortless to navigate, and delivers accurate responses, Gen-Z users evaluate the platform highly. Conversely, Dehumanization does not significantly affect Consumer Perception (H4 rejected), demonstrating that users' digital pragmatism completely overrides the psychological discomfort of a robotic, emotionless interaction. Furthermore, Dehumanization fails to act as a mediating variable between Perceived Usefulness (H5 rejected), Perceived Ease of Use (H6 rejected), Service Quality (H7 rejected), and Consumer Perception. Ultimately, these findings confirm that the technological efficiency and service speed of the chatbot directly drive positive consumer perceptions, entirely bypassing the psychological need for an empathetic human touch..

5.2 Research Implications

As presented in Chapter IV, this research indicates a positive and significant impact of Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Service Quality on Consumer Perception regarding e-commerce AI chatbots among Generation Z users. Furthermore, it highlights the non-significant role of Dehumanization. This model demonstrates a meaningful explanatory power, where the Adjusted R Square ($Adj. R^2$) is 0.672. This means that these variables explain approximately 67.2% of the variation in respondents' perception, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors beyond the model.

1. Implication of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

The significant effects of PU and PEOU indicate that functional pragmatism is the core driver of satisfaction for Gen-Z. This implies that the simpler, faster, and more intuitive the AI chatbot feels, the more positively users perceive the e-commerce brand. For implication, e-commerce platforms (such as Shopee) must focus on continuously upgrading the chatbot's UI/UX and ensuring it can solve basic logistical issues (tracking, refunds) effortlessly. Keeping the menu structure

consistent and minimizing the steps required to get a resolution will sustain positive user perception.

2. Implication of Service Quality

The findings suggest that Service Quality is the strongest driver of consumer perception. This implies that e-commerce platforms should focus on strengthening the chatbot's backend functional value where it matters most: speed and accuracy. It can involve increasing the algorithmic precision to ensure that the chatbot gives correct answers instantly rather than looping users in endless menus. Users are inclined to stay loyal to a platform when the automated service is highly dependable.

3. Implication of Dehumanization (The Rejection of the Hypotheses)

A pivotal implication of this study stems from the rejection of H4, H5, H6, and H7. The findings confirm that for Generation Z, dehumanization is not a barrier. They recognize the machine is cold and robotic, yet they do not care, provided it works perfectly. This implies a massive cost-saving opportunity for e-commerce businesses. Companies do not need to invest heavily in making chatbots overly "human-like" or conversational (which is expensive and technologically difficult). Instead, investments should be aggressively channeled into making the chatbot a hyper-efficient, highly knowledgeable, and fast-acting tool.

4. Theoretical Implications (For Academics and Future Researchers)

This study makes a substantial contribution to the existing literature on human-computer interaction, specifically extending the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and E-S-QUAL frameworks within the context of AI-driven customer service. First, by demonstrating that Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Service Quality significantly drive consumer perception, this research validates that utilitarian frameworks remain highly relevant for evaluating modern AI technologies. Second, and most importantly, the explicit rejection of the Dehumanization hypothesis (H4, H5, H6, H7) challenges traditional psychological theories, such as the "Computers as Social Actors" (CASA) paradigm, which assumes users inherently desire human-like social cues from machines. This study provides new empirical evidence that for digital-native demographics (Generation Z), technological pragmatism completely overrides the psychological cost of dehumanization.

Future researchers can utilize this finding as a baseline to explore how "digital pragmatism" shifts the theoretical boundaries of AI acceptance in emerging markets.

5. Practical Implications (For E-Commerce Brands and Management)

The findings offer actionable insights for e-commerce platforms (such as Shopee, Tokopedia, or Lazada) and digital service managers regarding resource allocation and UI/UX development. First, because service quality emerged as the strongest predictor of positive perception, e-commerce brands must prioritize the backend algorithmic accuracy and response speed of their chatbots. The chatbot must be able to instantly resolve high-frequency logistical issues (e.g., tracking orders, processing refunds) without forcing users into endless, confusing loops. Second, the finding that dehumanization does not negatively affect consumer perception presents a massive cost-saving opportunity for tech companies. Management does not need to over-engineer their AI chatbots with hyper-empathetic, conversational, or overly "human-like" personas which are technologically complex and expensive to maintain. Instead, development budgets should be strictly channeled into maximizing the chatbot's functional utility, speed, and seamless navigation.

6. Social Implications (For Local Context and Society 5.0)

This research highlights the readiness of consumers in secondary Indonesian cities to embrace the principles of Society 5.0. The demographic of Gen-Z in Padang City demonstrates a mature, pragmatic understanding of human-machine boundaries; they recognize that machines are designed for "thinking and doing" (functional tasks) rather than "feeling" (emotional tasks). This indicates that the local society is highly adaptable to rapid digital transformation. For policymakers and local business developers, this implies that introducing automated digital services in regional markets will be met with positive adoption, provided that the technology genuinely simplifies daily activities and delivers concrete, efficient results.

5.3 Research Limitations

The research has various limitations which need to be taken into account when explaining the findings and when referring to them in future studies:

1. **Limited scope of respondents:** This paper focused only on Generation Z e-commerce users in Padang City who responded to the questionnaire.

Therefore, the results may not be fully representative of Gen-Z users in major metropolitan areas (like Jakarta or Surabaya) or older generations (like Millennials or Gen-X) who might have completely different psychological thresholds for dehumanization.

2. **Limited variables in the research model:** To explain Consumer Perception, the model only used four variables. Even though this model explains a meaningful portion of perception ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.672$), there remains 32.8% of unexplained variance that could be accounted for by other important factors not included in this study, such as brand trust, perceived risk, privacy concerns, or social influence.
3. **Cross-sectional research design:** The research design was cross-sectional, which implies that data had been gathered at a single time (June-July 2026). Consequently, the research only captures the perception of the respondents at that specific time and is unable to monitor how perceptions of AI might evolve as AI technology becomes even more advanced in the coming years.

5.4 Research Recommendations

Following the outcomes of this research, discussion, and conclusions, it is recommended to offer the following suggestions in order to enhance future research as well as to offer real-life guidance to the concerned parties:

1. **Compare Generations (Cross-Generational Study):** Since this study proved that Gen-Z does not care about dehumanization, future research should compare Gen-Z with Gen-X or Baby Boomers. Older generations might prioritize human empathy and thus might be negatively affected by dehumanization. Identifying these differences can help e-commerce platforms create age-segmented customer service strategies.
2. **Include additional variables to enrich the model:** Future studies should introduce other variables that are relevant in the digital context, such as Trust in AI, Perceived Privacy Risk, or AI Literacy. The inclusion of these variables can provide a more detailed explanation of how consumer perception is formed.

3. **Decompose Service Quality:** Since Service Quality is the strongest predictor, future research can break it down into its specific dimensions (Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance) to test which specific dimension most strongly drives positive perception.
4. **Focus on specific platforms:** Future studies should focus exclusively on comparing specific AI chatbots (e.g., comparing Shopee's chatbot directly with Tokopedia's chatbot) to determine if different algorithmic designs lead to different levels of perceived dehumanization and satisfaction

